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May 7, 1982

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MEMORANDUM

To: Ad Hoc Federal-Academic Task Force on the Development and  
Utilization of International Skills

From: Robert E. Ward

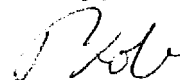
Subject: Task Force Agenda

I am attaching a joint memorandum from Dr. Beal and myself that attempts to outline agenda items for our next meeting. Since our March gathering in Washington, we have continued to explore possible sources of support. The findings, while inconclusive, are sufficiently encouraging to warrant convening a small meeting of federal and academic representatives in Washington in June.

Dr. Beal is abroad until the end of May. He will be in touch with the federal agencies about participation in that meeting upon his return. I will do the same for the academic representatives. You will recall that we agreed in March that this next meeting should involve a small working group charged with formulating a specific plan of action which would then be presented for consideration, amendment, and approval to a further meeting of our entire group.

We will be back in touch to report the results of the June meeting as soon as possible. Thanks for your interest and support.

Cordially,



REW:hb  
Enclosure

May 10, 1982

Memorandum

To: Ad Hoc Federal-Academic Task Force on the Development and Utilization of International Skills

From: Richard S. Beal, Special Assistant to the President and Director, White House Office of Planning and Evaluation

Robert E. Ward, Director, Center for Research in International Studies, Stanford University

Subject: Task Force Agenda

We were charged by the March 11, 1982 Federal-Academic Conference on the Development and Utilization of International Skills with convening a Task Force to consider and recommend to a second session of the Conference means of taking joint federal-academic action on a variety of matters in the international area that are of interest both to the international agencies of the federal government and the major research universities. Dr. Beal was asked to arrange the federal and Dr. Ward the academic representation on this Task Force and we were both asked to suggest an appropriate agenda for its first meeting. Dr. Beal will shortly get in touch with all agencies that attended or expressed an interest in the March 11 Conference about their representation on the Task Force. Dr. Ward is currently arranging the academic representation. In the meantime this memorandum is being sent to all individuals concerned to keep them informed of developments.

At the March 11 Conference the following spheres of shared federal-academic interest were identified:

1. The poor general state of federal-academic relations in the international sphere that has prevailed for the last decade, the absence of any systematic or effective means of considering shared interests and problems, and what might be done in a period of increasing national need to remedy this unfortunate situation.
2. Campus-based research of a midterm or longterm nature on international topics or problems possessed of significant federal and scholarly interest and importance.
3. The capacity of the universities to meet the current and prospective manpower needs of the federal

government for general and special international skills and how this capacity could be insured and improved.

4. Contributions that the universities could make to the retraining or updating of the international skills of specialists already in the federal service.
5. The use that federal agencies make of international specialists on their staffs, the career options and prospects for such specialists, and how these might be improved.
6. Ways in which the federal-academic discourse in which we are presently engaged could be expanded to include an international business component.

This is a formidable array of problems, the more so given the present state of disrepair in federal-academic relations, our lack of experience in cooperating at this level, and the absence of established channels for doing so. Under these circumstances we suspect that it would be prudent to begin operations on a selective and experimental basis calculated to explore the degree of real interest, commitment, and ability to deliver on both sides, establish mutual confidence and, hopefully, demonstrate that there is real advantage for both the government and the universities in working together along these lines. Our nominee for this initial experiment and status as prime item on the Task Force's immediate agenda is campus-based research of the sort noted in Item 2 above.

If this suggestion is generally acceptable, some of the issues with which the Task Force should deal would be:

1. Assuming that the federal agencies involved favor federal support for campus-based international research of a mid-or longterm nature, should such a program be organized and administered on an agency-by-agency basis within the government or on some more unified and collaborative basis? If the latter, how should it be constituted? What federal agencies should be represented and at what levels? Should it include academic as well as agency representation? How should its mandate be defined?
2. Assuming that the universities also favor some program of this sort and a collaborative form of organization, how should they organize and administer the academic side of such a joint venture? What universities should be involved? Who should represent them? And how could such an inter-university organization best interact with its federal counterpart or counterparts?

3. How might an endeavor of this sort best be financed? Totally by the government? With some academic contribution, for example, to the universities' share of some aspects of the administrative costs? Should membership on the agency side require a substantial financial commitment to the support of the program?
4. What provisions and safeguards could be built into the research program to insure its integrity, reputation, and effectiveness from the academic as well as the federal standpoint? How could one prevent its diverting an undue amount of campus-based skills and interest from international research that is not policy-relevant? Who should be eligible to participate? How should research awards be determined? Should awards be made on a grant or a contractual basis?

One can readily multiply relevant but abstract questions of this kind. It usually helps at this early stage of a complicated venture, however, to have some more substantial target to shoot at and, in so doing, generate new ideas and focus and refine one's own thinking. Speaking only for ourselves, therefore, let us advance a few preliminary thoughts and reflections that may be relevant without committing ourselves to any of them.

We feel that the most important accomplishment that could emerge from our activities is some continuing and institutionalized means of conducting timely and informed discussions on international topics of mutual interest between the relevant federal agencies and the major research universities. Campus-based research seems an appropriate and promising point of entry for such an undertaking. If properly organized and conducted, it clearly involves benefits for both sides: more and better policy-relevant information and analysis for the government, badly needed financial support and enhanced professional opportunities and skills for the academics and, for both sides, the satisfaction and practical advantages of contributing new strengths to the country's capacity to cope more effectively with a variety of challenging international problems and opportunities.

Because of these larger considerations we would favor the establishment of some form of joint federal-academic body that would provide regular opportunities for discussion of shared concerns in the research field rather than some more disaggregated system. This would mean some sort of ad hoc interagency committee on the federal side and an inter-university consortium somewhat similar to the National Council for Soviet and East European Research on the academic side. The federal portion of this joint body would presumably have to include representation of the research interests of each member agency. The academic portion could be composed of

one specialist from each of a dozen or so of the major research universities selected by their presidents in such a fashion as to cover major area and subject matter fields of international research. Total membership should be kept as small as possible. The principal functions of this body could be the identification of international research fields, topics, and skills of mutual interest to the agencies and universities; specifying the terms on which federal funding in support of campus-based international research and training programs would be available; and playing a general advisory and advocacy role with respect to the administration, staffing, and financing of the programs involved.

From the academic standpoint at least it would be desirable that federal membership on this joint body not be limited to agencies currently able to make a substantial financial contribution to the support of the campus-based research and training programs involved. While the budgetary circumstances of the international agencies of the federal government may differ appreciably from year to year and from administration to administration, their research needs of an international sort are both more stable and bound to increase in coming years. In most, if not all, cases these needs are reflected in corresponding interests and skills on campus. Even if substantial research funding were temporarily not available from particular federal agencies, it would be desirable to have their interests represented on the joint body in anticipation of a time at which they were better able to contribute.

Where funding is concerned, it would seem appropriate that the universities bear their share of the costs of the meetings of the joint body. These could well be held on campus as well as in Washington. The most important financial consideration is the reliability of whatever federal funding may be provided. Four general types of funding procedure suggest themselves. In descending order of desirability they would be: 1) The establishment by Act of Congress of a capital endowment fund similar to that of the Japan-United States Friendship Commission, the income, and part of the capital, from which could be used to support international research and training programs. 2) An inter-agency funding arrangement similar to that of the Intelligence Community's National Foreign Intelligence Program, administered by a selected agency on behalf of the group. 3) Some form of off-budget contribution from the research budgets of individual member agencies. 4) Inclusion as a line item in the annual research budgets of member agencies.

Assuming that adequate federal funding is made available in order to administer the on-campus research and training programs involved, it would be necessary to create along more general lines some such organization as the present National Council for Soviet and East European Research. All of you should by this time have received from Vladimir Toumanoff,

Executive Director of that Council, an updated description of its organization, financing, and procedures. These have worked reasonably well in practice and would seem to be adaptable to this more general purpose. The academic portion of the federal-academic joint body could serve as its Policy Board and should be able to coopt on economical terms the specialized international expertise it would need to conduct its competitions for research and training awards. These competitions should, of course, be national in scope and open to all qualified post-doctoral (or equivalent) applicants from any university.

Where safeguarding the integrity, reputation, and efficiency of this program on campus and preventing it from diverting an undue amount of campus-based skills and interest from international research that is not policy-relevant are concerned, the following considerations seem relevant. The initial selection of fields and topics eligible for federal support would have to be approved by the academic portion of the joint federal-academic body, i.e. by a panel of eminent and reputable scholars in the international field. The competition for research awards would be open to all qualified applicants from any university and judged by panels of recognized specialists in the fields concerned. Participation in such national competitions would be left solely to the initiative and inclinations of the individual scholar. The list of federal agencies sponsoring the program would be widely publicized. Classified materials would not be used in research conducted under the program's auspices. The results of the research could be freely published on the normal academic terms.

Where safeguards against the undue diversion of campus-based skills and interest from international research that is not policy relevant are concerned, one might note that there is no intent of altering any of the existing federal or private programs that provide support for research in the international field without primary regard for whether or not it is policy-relevant. Such sources of support would continue to be available and the present proposal should be regarded as an addition to rather than a subtraction from these.

There are doubtless other ways of going about this venture. We hold no special brief for the preceding formula beyond the fact that some of its aspects have been tested in practice by the National Council for Soviet and East European Research. The Task Force should feel completely free to approach our problem from any angle that makes sense to them and their agency.

While believing that it would be wise at this initial stage to focus on a single problem such as campus-based international research, we do not feel that the other equally important problems outlined early in this memorandum should be

ignored. We intend that time will be made available on the Task Force agenda to discuss in preliminary fashion the nature and timing of first steps that might be taken in these areas as well. We should keep in mind, however, that some of them would require somewhat different types of academic representation than is appropriate for the research issue.

Thanks for your patience and your interest.